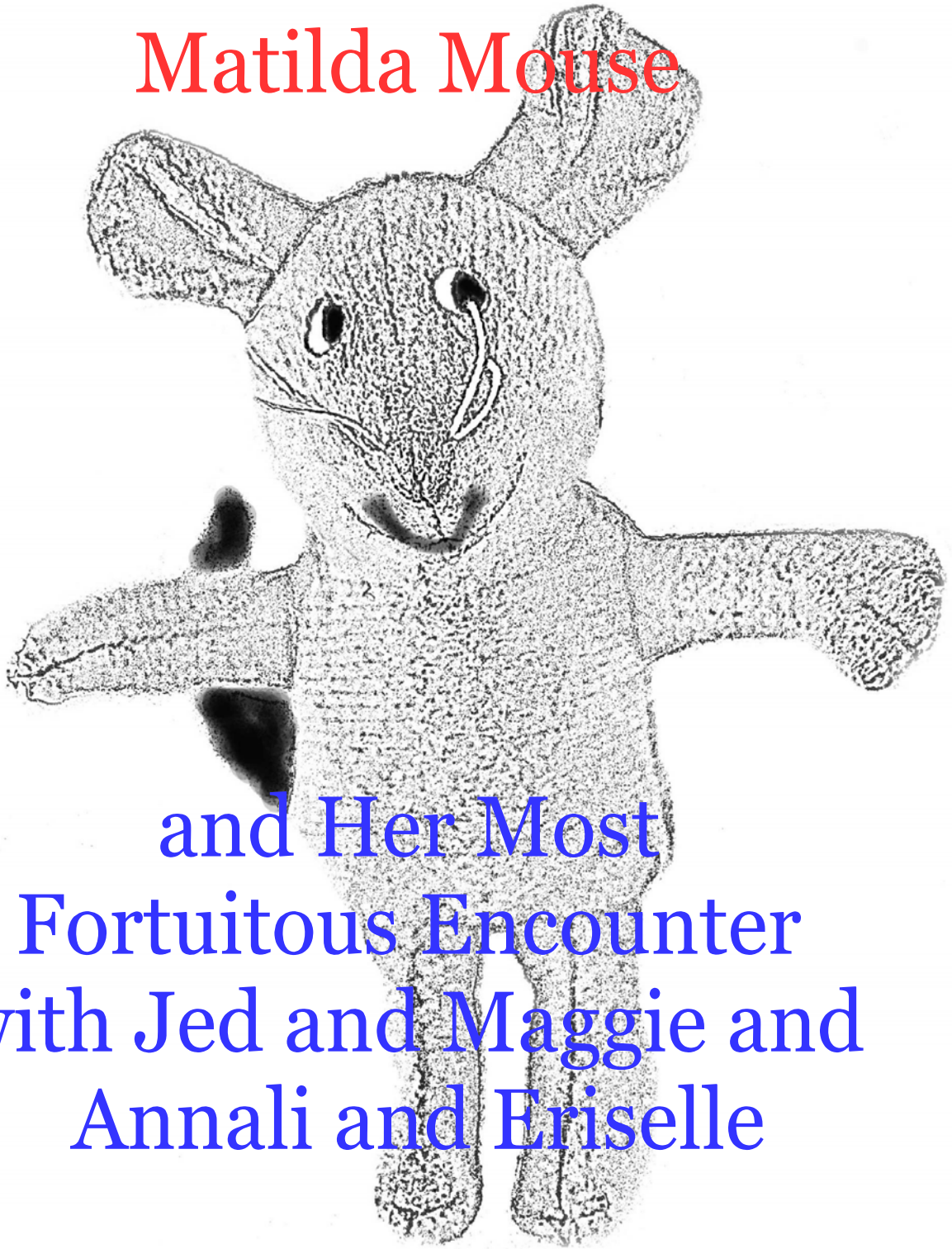


Matilda Mouse



and Her Most
Fortuitous Encounter
with Jed and Maggie and
Annali and Eriselle

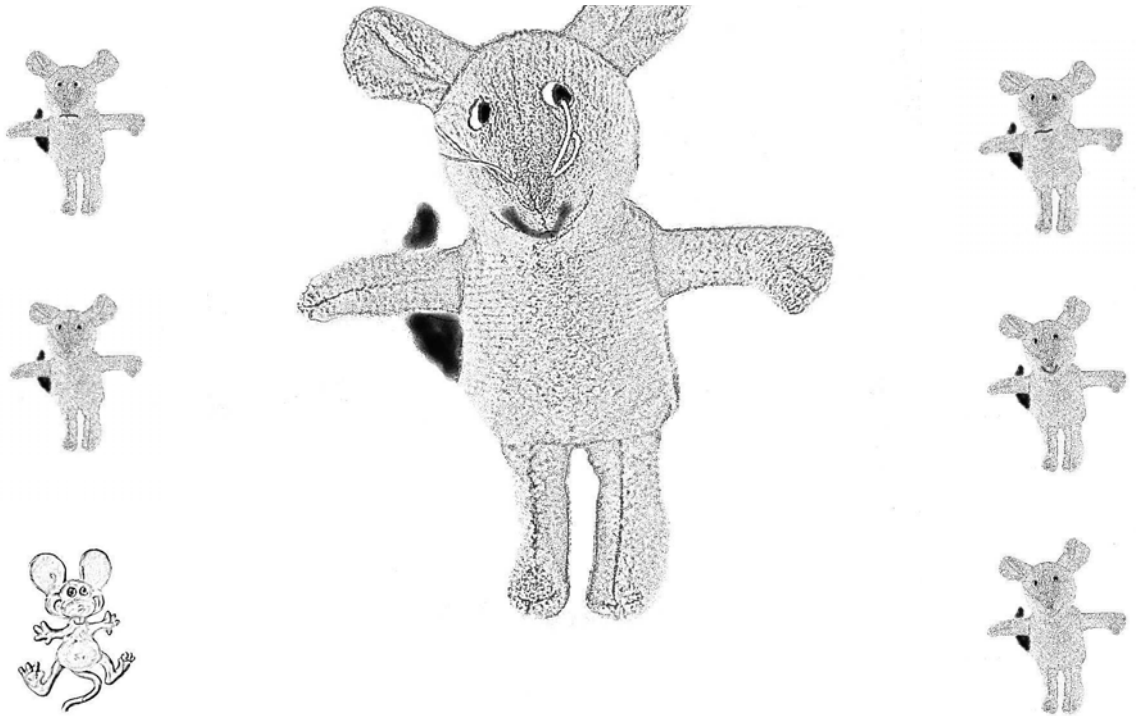
by Papa

© 2014 by Joseph Gascho. The author retains sole copyright to his contributions to this book.



The Blurb-provided layout designs and graphic elements are copyright Blurb Inc., 2012. This book was created using the Blurb creative publishing service. The book author retains sole copyright to his or her contributions to this book.

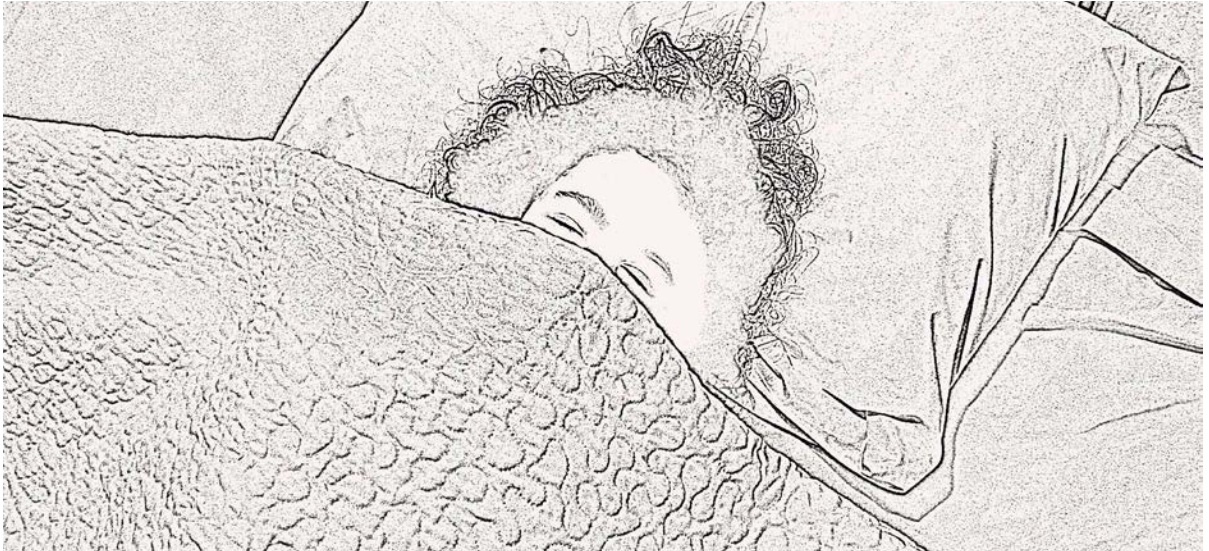




Matilda Mouse and her Fortuitous Encounter with Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle

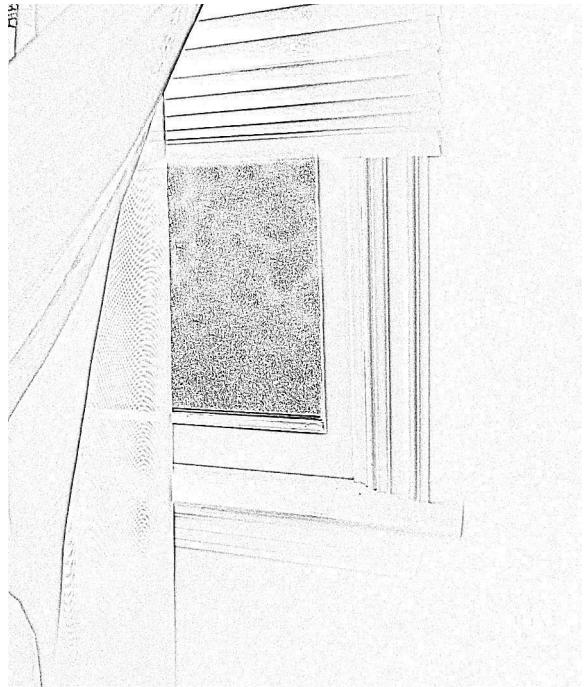
by Papa with special assistance from Nana for color analysis
and editorial suggestions.





Annali was two cat whiskers away from sound asleep when she heard a noise that sounded like Eriselle eating corn on the cob, only it was much much quieter. Shrip...Shrip...Shrip.

At first she thought it was the wind blowing two branches together, but then she remembered that Mommy had pulled down the window just before she tucked her into bed.

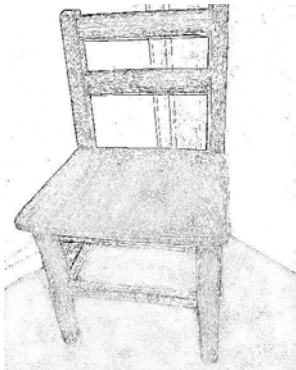


It was not a scary noise, but she did wonder what was making it and where it was coming from.

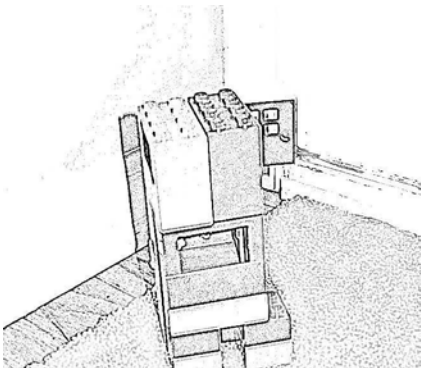
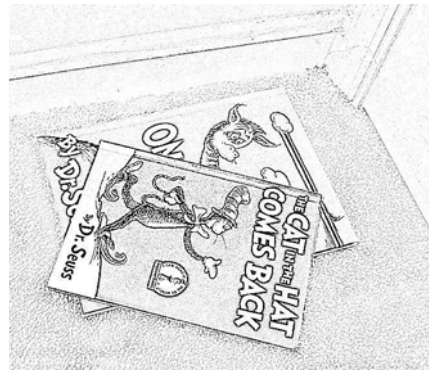
Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter



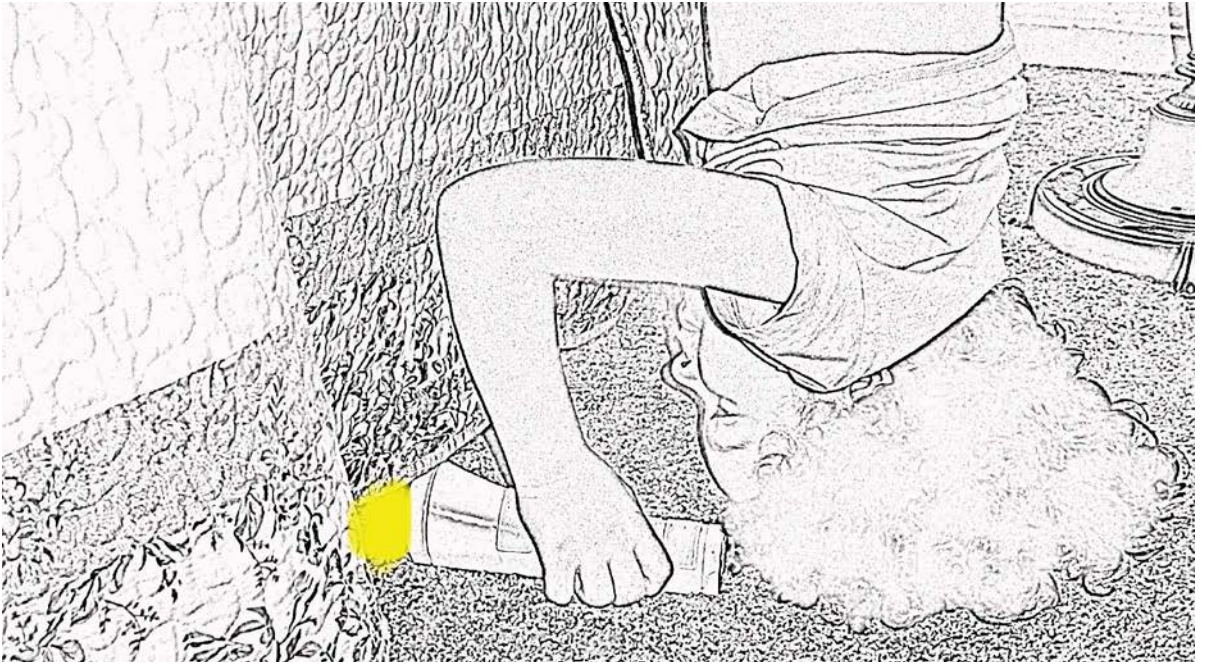
So she reached under her pillow for the flashlight she always always kept there and pulled it out and switched it on.



She sat up in bed and shined the light into every corner of her room. All she saw was a shoe and a house made out of Lego and two Dr. Seuss books piled on top of each other and a little chair.

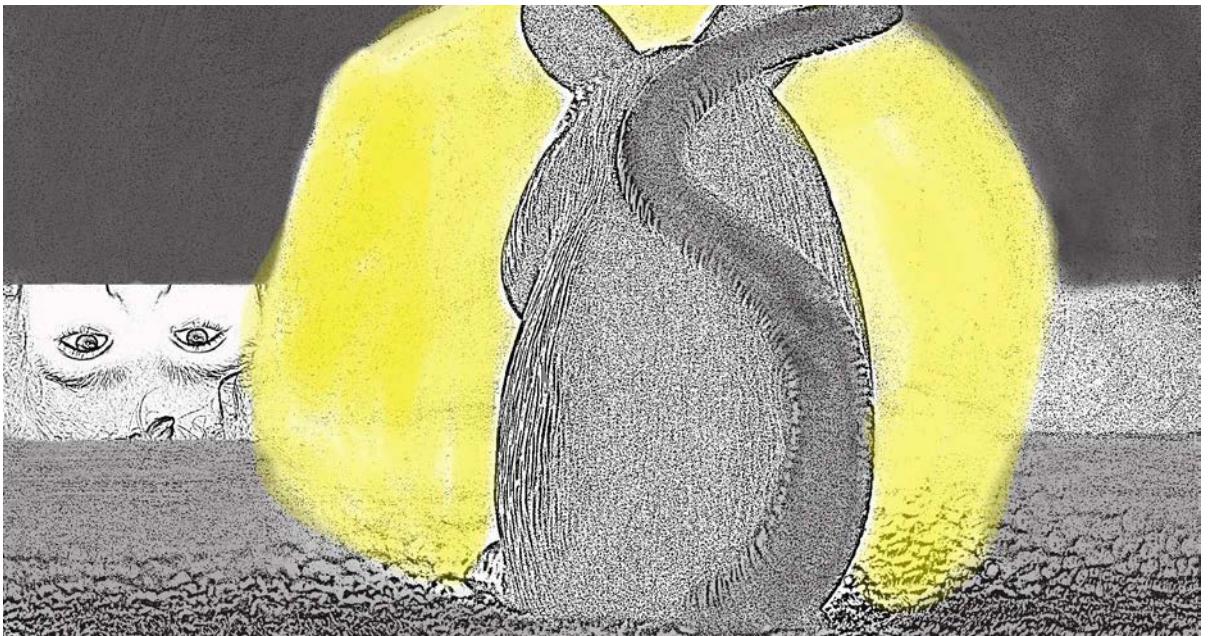


Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter



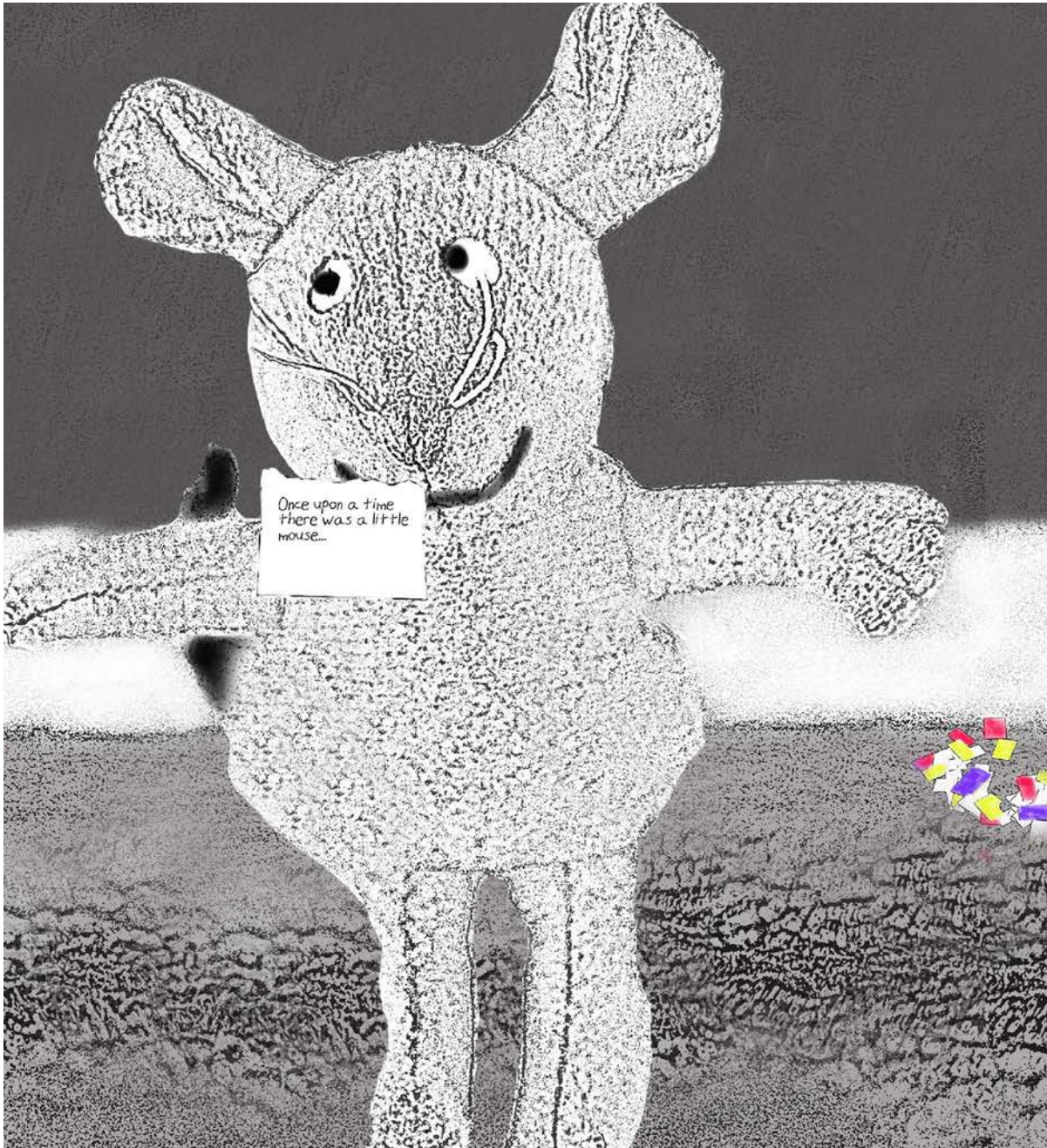
Shrip. Shrip. Shrip. The noise would stop for five seconds and then start again. Where could it be coming from? What was making the noise?

So Annali decided to look one more place. She always shined her light in this place before she went to bed, but she thought it was worth doing it again. So she leaned down and poked her head so she could see, and shined the light under her bed.



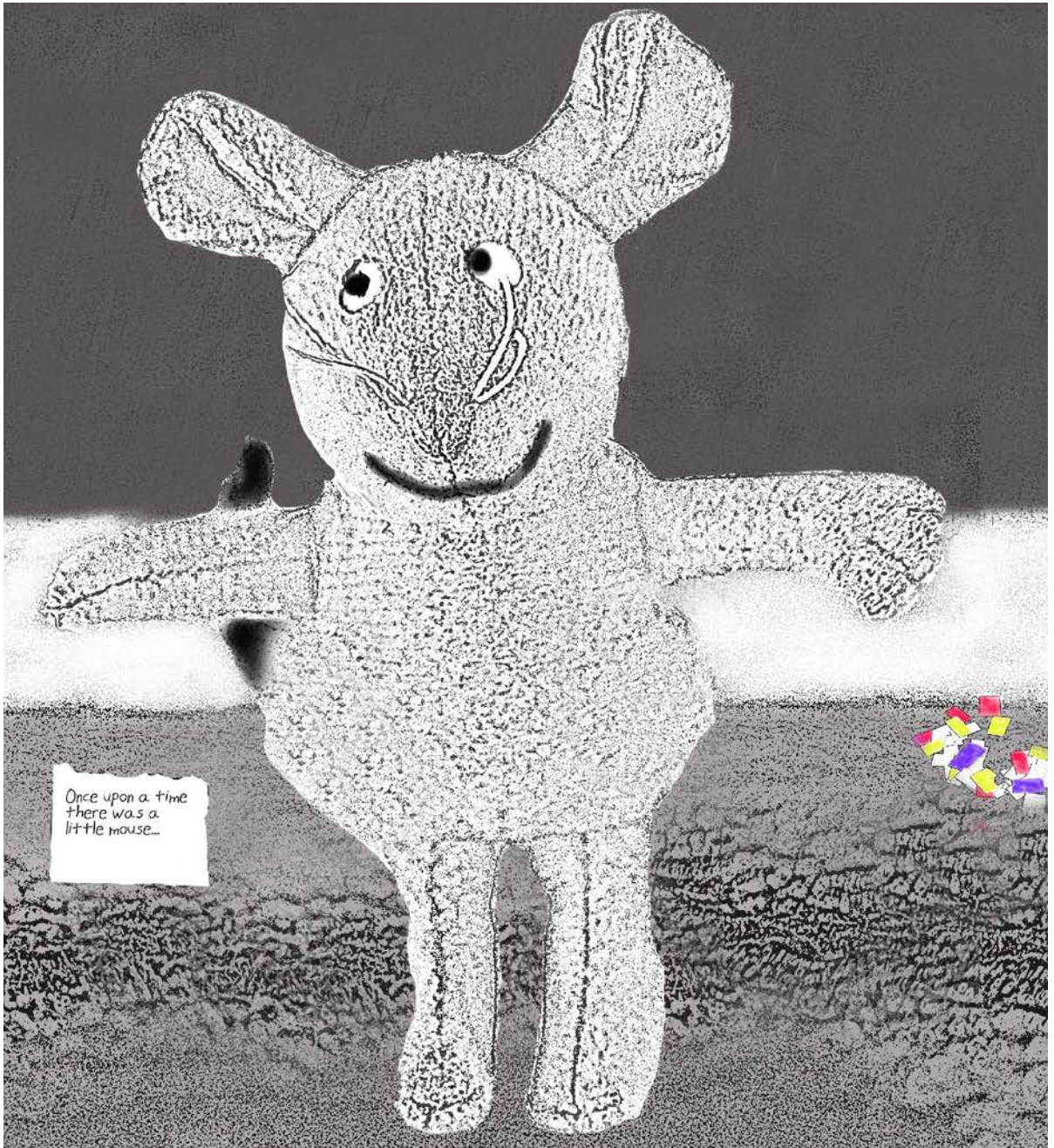
Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter

Because she was now five she only gasped and did not scream like she would have done if she was four because when she shined her flashlight under the bed she saw.....



a mouse, standing on its hind feet chewing a piece of paper, actually a piece of paper upon which Annali had not more than two hours ago written, "Once upon a time there was a little mouse..."

Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter



Before she could think she asked the mouse, "What are you doing? Why are you here under my bed?" As soon as she said this she thought to herself, "How silly, I know that a mouse cannot talk."

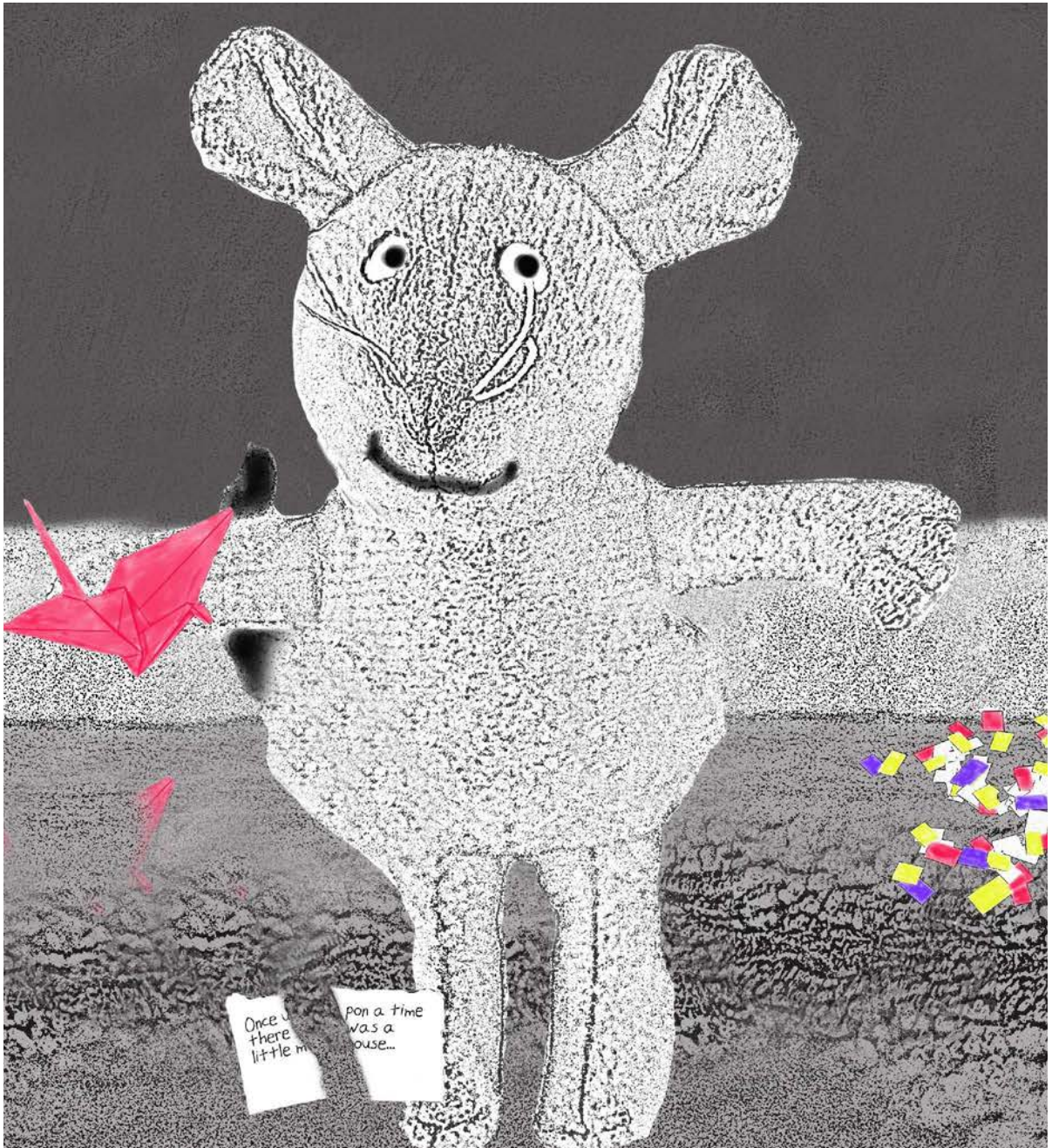
But the mouse stopped chewing, put down the paper, and said, "My name is Matilda. I am shredding up paper. This is my house."

Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter



Annali could not believe her ears or her eyes. She jumped out of bed and ran next door to Eriselle's room and woke her up and ran down the stairs to the living room where Jed and Maggie (who were visiting from Michigan) were sleeping on a blow up bed and woke them up. She was very very quiet so as not to wake up any adults.

Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter



Jed and Maggie ran up the steps and Eriselle ran from her room and they flopped on the bed and leaned down and looked under the bed and they could not believe their ears and eyes when they saw Matilda chewing on a piece of paper, a new one, a piece of red paper that Jed had folded into the shape of a crane, that when pulled on made the crane flap its wings.

Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter

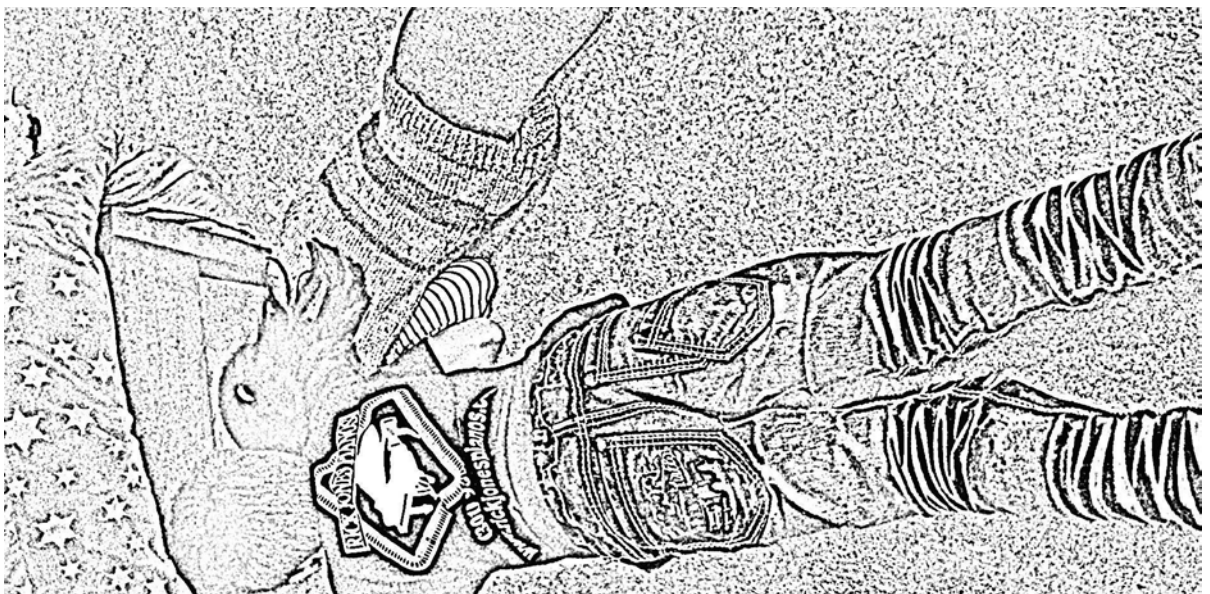
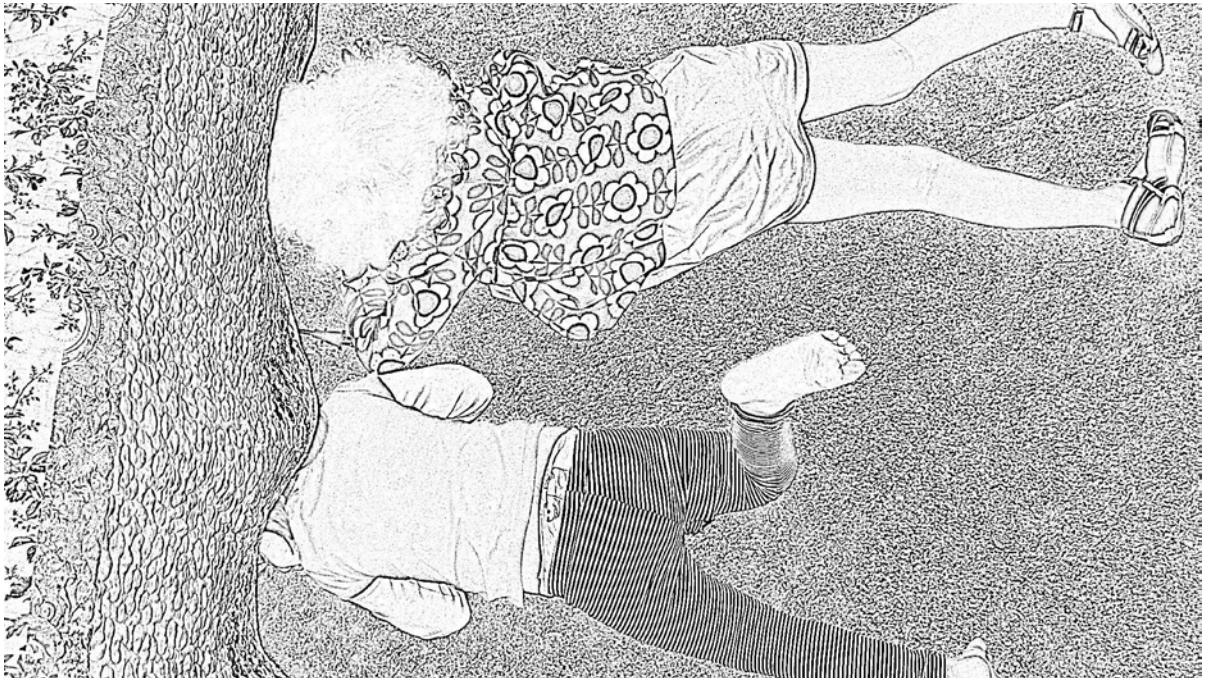


Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle sat on top of Annali's bed and scratched their heads and asked each other what they should do. Erislle said, "We should tell Mommy about this."

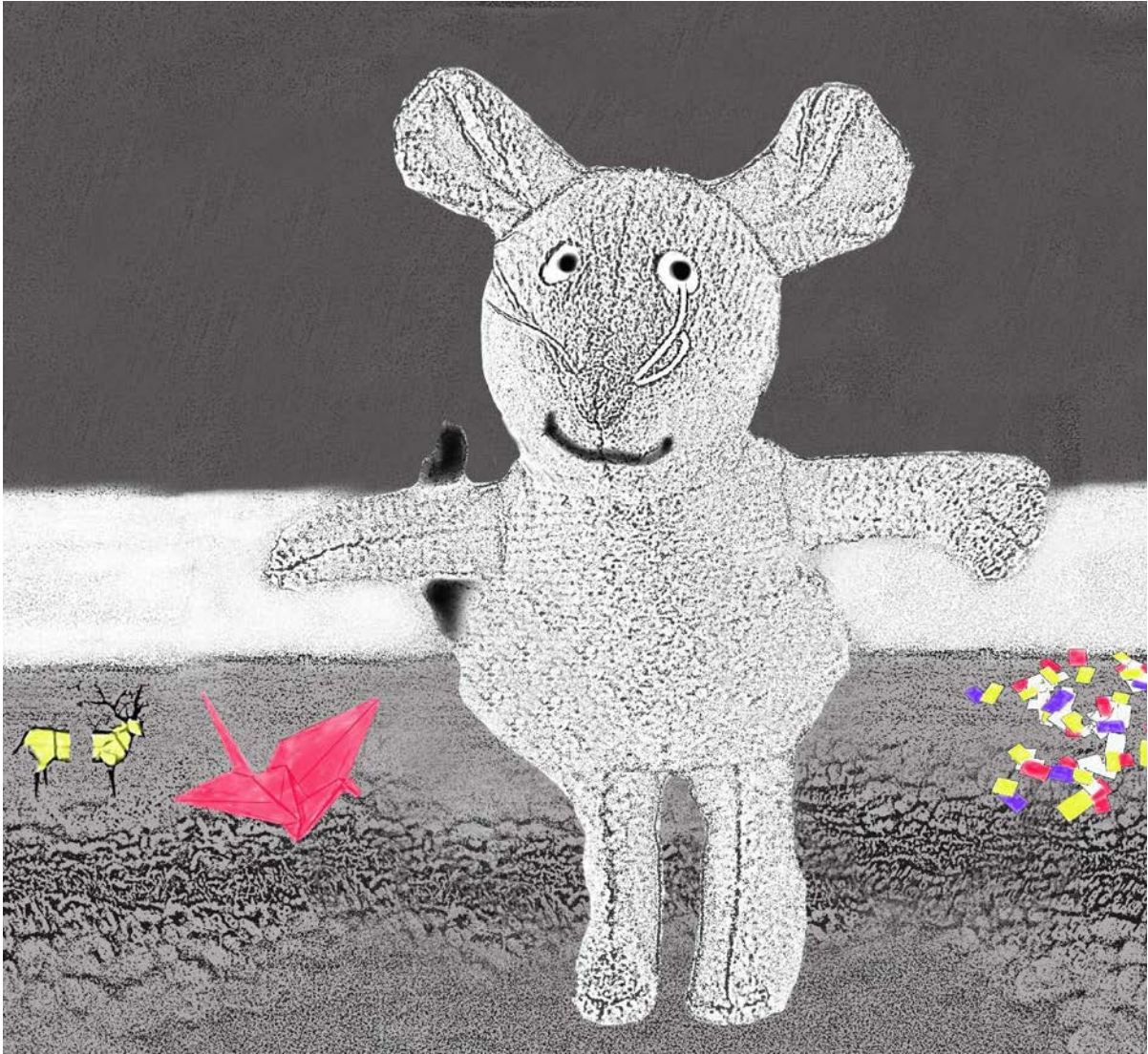
Maggie said, "No, we must not tell any adults about this. They will talk about how dirty Matilda is and my daddy or Uncle Teman will catch Matilda and throw her out in the yard."



Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter



Jed said, “Why is she chewing on the paper?” Annali said, “Let’s ask her.” So they flopped on the bed and leaned down and looked under the bed and they said, “Matilda, why are you chewing on the paper?” By now she was chewing on a piece of yellow cardstock that Maggie had folded into the shape of a deer with antlers. And by now there was a big pile of chewed up paper, red and yellow and purple, behind Matilda.

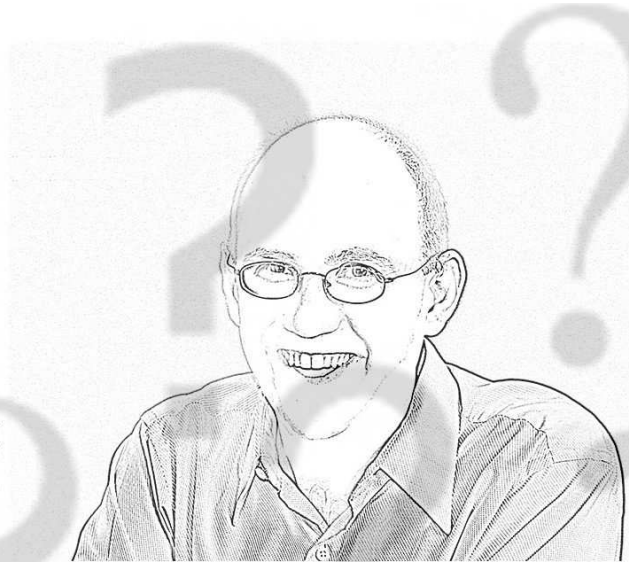


Matilda put down the yellow deer, by now chewed exactly in half, and said, “I am building a nest. Please leave me alone. It is very important that I do this and I have to do it right now or it will be too late. You have been kind to me. You have not told any adults about me and I am very grateful. Please leave me alone. Come back tomorrow night and I will tell you more.”

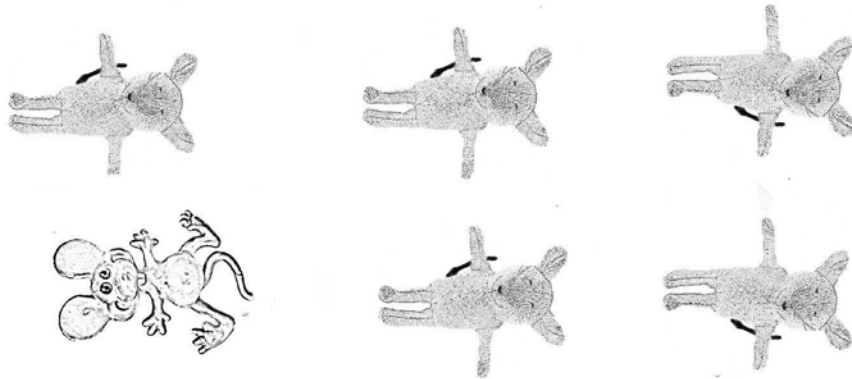
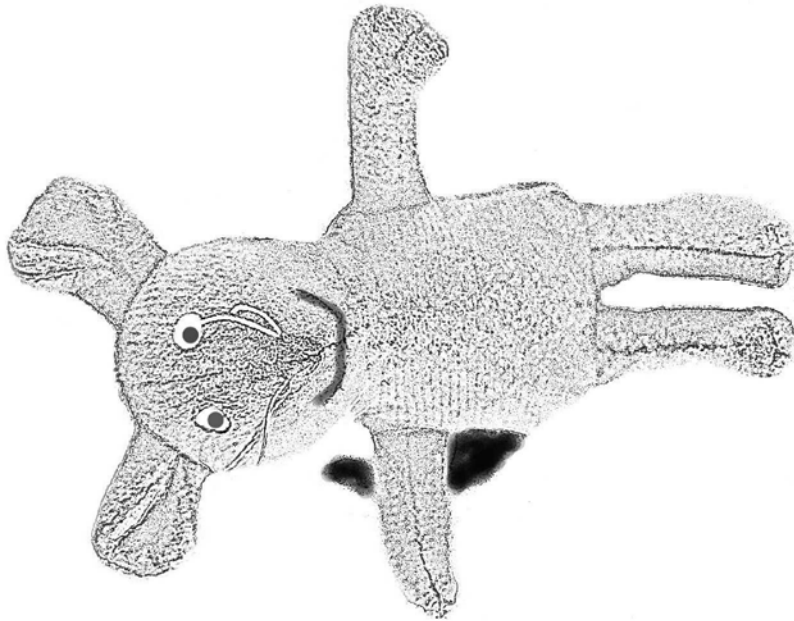


Matilda talked so confidently that without thinking Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle pulled up their heads and went back to their regular beds and the blowup bed, without a word. Annali stayed because they were lying on her bed. And although it was very very hard they fell asleep and although they slept all night, they all dreamed about mice eating eggs and eggs hatching dinosaurs.

Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter

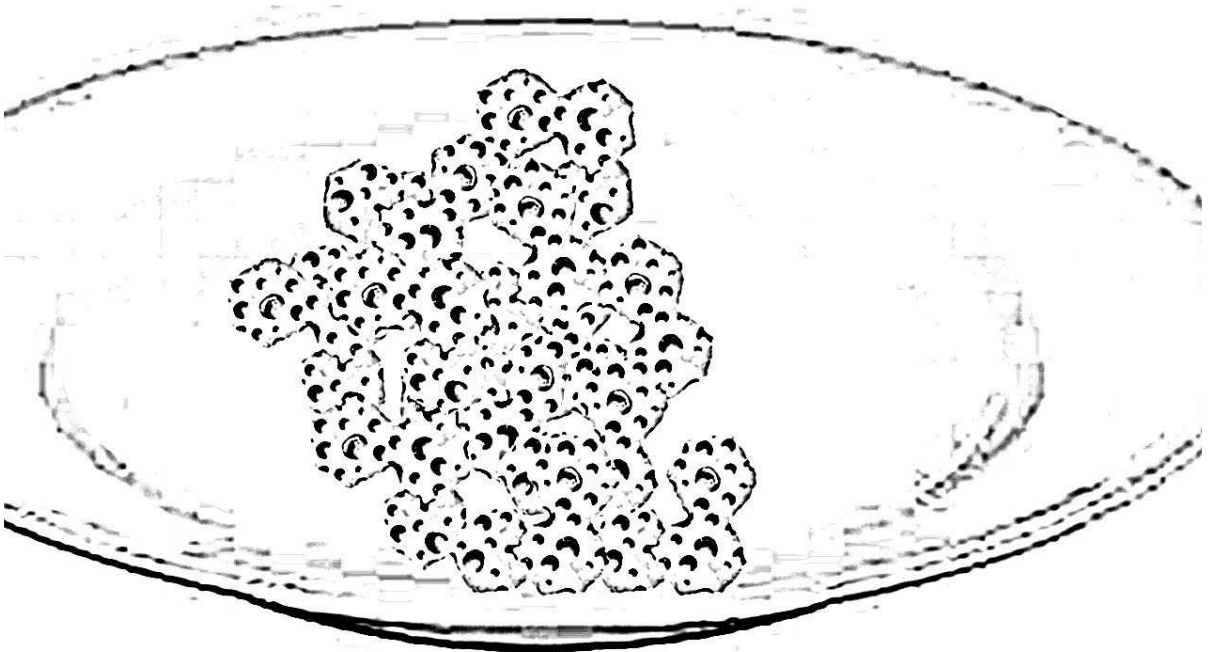


The next day Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle were all very very quiet. Uncle Teman and Uncle Joe and Aunt Elena and Aunt Susan could not figure out why they were so very quiet and they could not figure out why Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle wanted to go to bed so early that night. Usually Eriselle wanted her mommy to read her two more books and Jed and Maggie each wanted time to fold another origami animal and Annali wanted to read two more chapters in her book.



There was Matilda, only this time she was not standing but she was lying on a big mound of chewed up red and yellow and orange and brown and white paper.

Around her were six baby mice! Matilda smiled at Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle and said, “I would like to introduce to you Annabelle and Bruce and Catolba and Diana and Earlene and Ferdanand.” Eriselle wanted to crawl under the bed and touch the new babies but Maggie and Annali and Jed told her she should not do that.



Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle did not know what to say but finally Jed said, “Thank you for introducing your new family. Your babies are very pretty.” And Maggie said, “Can we do anything for you?”

Matilda said, “Yes you can. I am very hungry.” So Annali jumped off the bed and ran (very quietly) down the steps and opened the refrigerator door and pulled out a hunk of yellow cheese and opened the drawer where the spoons and knives and forks were kept and pulled out a table knife and ran up the steps (carrying it as she was taught to carry knives and scissors). She laid the cheese on the floor and Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle cut up the cheese into 14 pieces and put the cheese on a little pile under the bed.



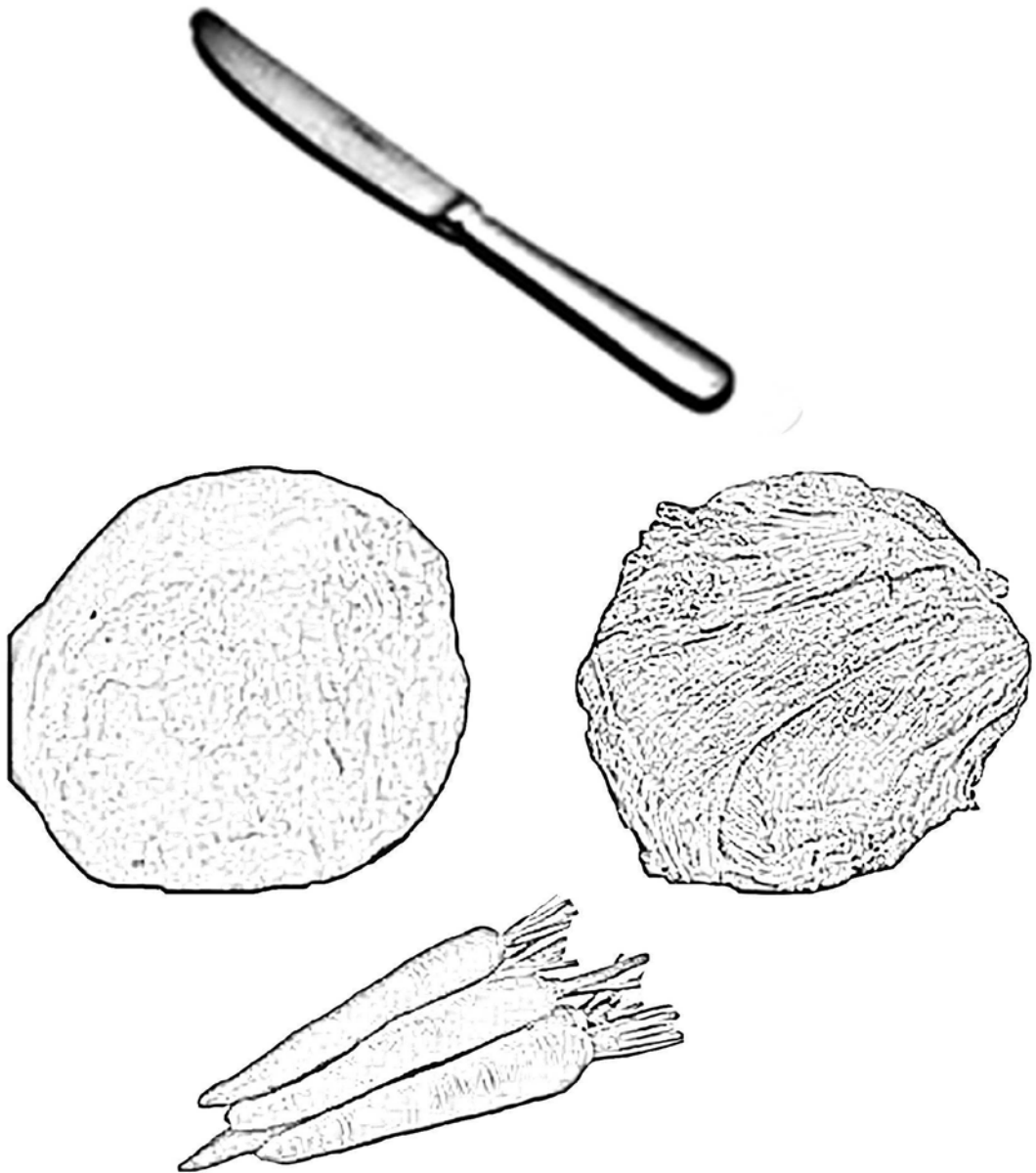
Matilda said, “Thank you so very much. You are splendid friends indeed! My children are very tired. It has been good to see you but it is time for you to leave.”

Matilda talked so confidently that without thinking Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle pulled up their heads and went back to their regular bed and blowup bed without a word. (Annali stayed because they were lying on her bed) . Although it was very very hard, they fell asleep and although they slept all night, they all dreamed about baby mice.

Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter

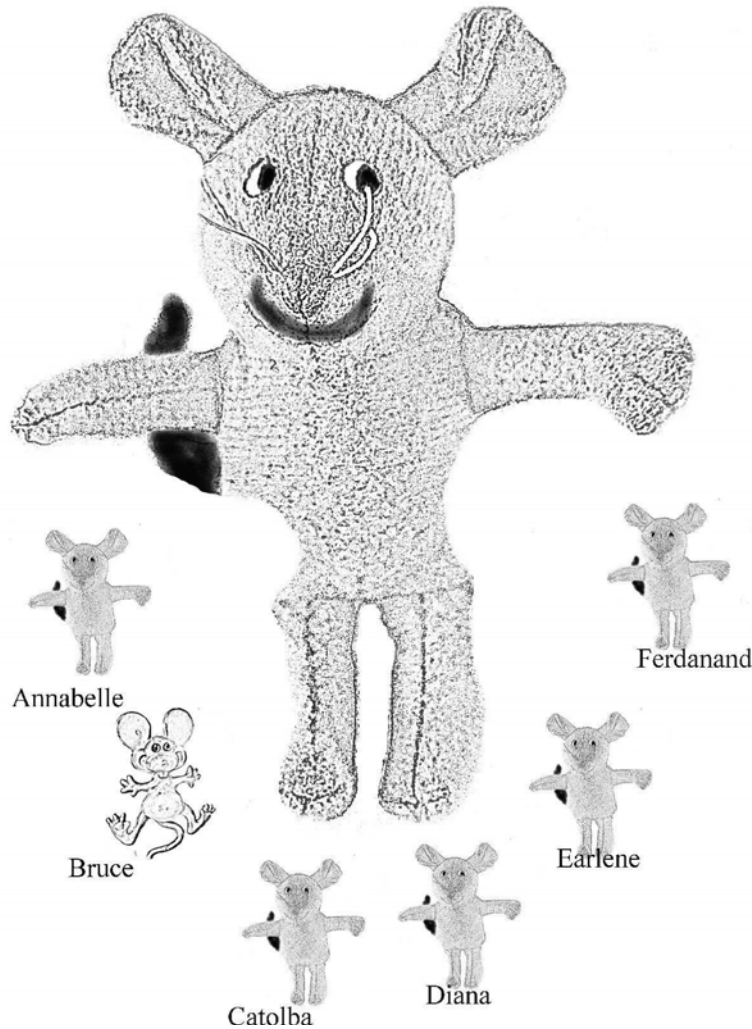


Every night for the next week Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle flopped down on the floor and looked under the bed



and looked at Matilda and her six babies. And every night Jed or Maggie or Annali or Eriselle sneaked down the steps very quietly to the kitchen and opened the refrigerator door and pulled out lettuce or a carrot or a hunk of bread and pulled out a table knife from the drawer and sneaked up the steps very quietly and cut up the lettuce or carrot or hunk of bread into 12 - 17 pieces and laid them on a little pile under the bed. Matilda always said, "Thank you so very much. You are most wonderful friends."

Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter



On the eighth night Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle flopped on Annali's bed and leaned down and looked under the bed and were surprised to see Matilda standing and to see Annabelle and Bruce and Catolba and Diana and Earlene and Ferdinand standing! Matilda said, "It is so very good to see you. I have a big favor to ask. It is time to move. Will you help us?"

Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle did not know what to say except, "Of course. But how can we help you?"

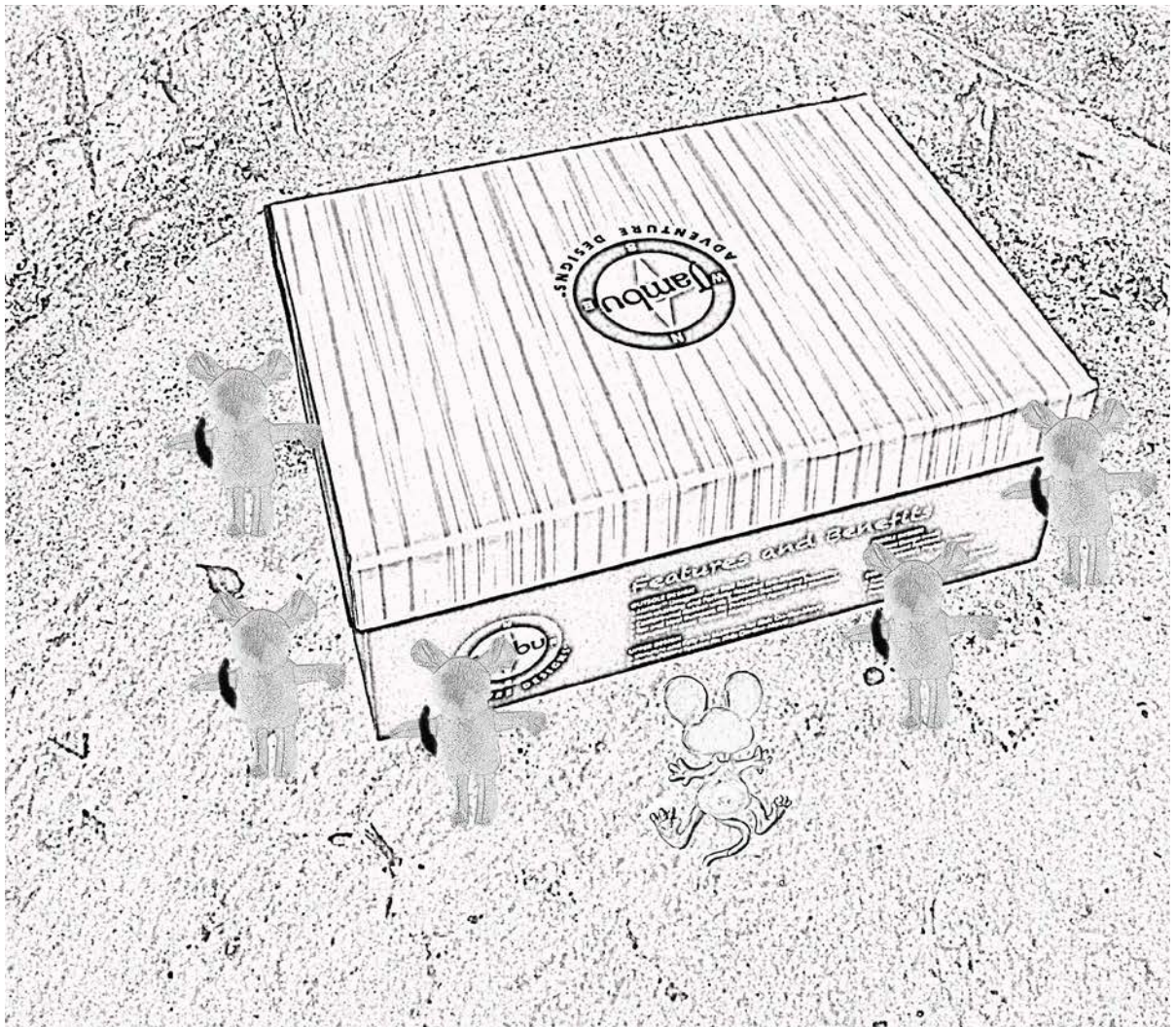
Matilda said, "Bring two pieces of stiff paper. Regular paper is too thin and will bend." So Annali ran to the bookshelf in her room and picked up two pieces of paper and brought them to Matilda.



Then Matilda said, “Please take us out to the garage.” So Eriselle and Annali ever so gently picked up the red piece of construction paper, holding Matilda (she did not seem one bit afraid) and put it on top of a cookie sheet



they had snuck out of the kitchen and Jed and Maggie every so gently picked up the yellow piece of construction paper holding Annabelle and Bruce and Catolba and Diana and Earlene and Ferdanand who all seemed supremely confident) and put them on top of a big cookie sheet they had snuck out of a drawer in the pantry.



Making sure no adults were awake, Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle sneaked down the steps ever so carefully with their precious loads and ever so quietly opened the back door and slowly walked out the back walk to the garage and opened the door. Matilda pointed to the far right corner and said, "There." So Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle walked there, around the cars, and leaned down and put the cookie sheets holding the construction paper on the ground. Annali shined her flashlight and Matilda walked off the yellow piece of construction paper and led Annabelle and Bruce and Catolba and Diana and Earlene and Ferdanand off the red piece of construction paper. They disappeared around a big box.



Just before they disappeared Matilda turned around, bowed, and said, “Thank you so very much. You have indeed been very kind.”

And then she and her babies was gone.

Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter



When Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle went to school, two weeks later, on the first day, they were asked to tell their classes something special that had happened to them that summer. Jed told his class about the time he served an ace when playing tennis with his father

Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter



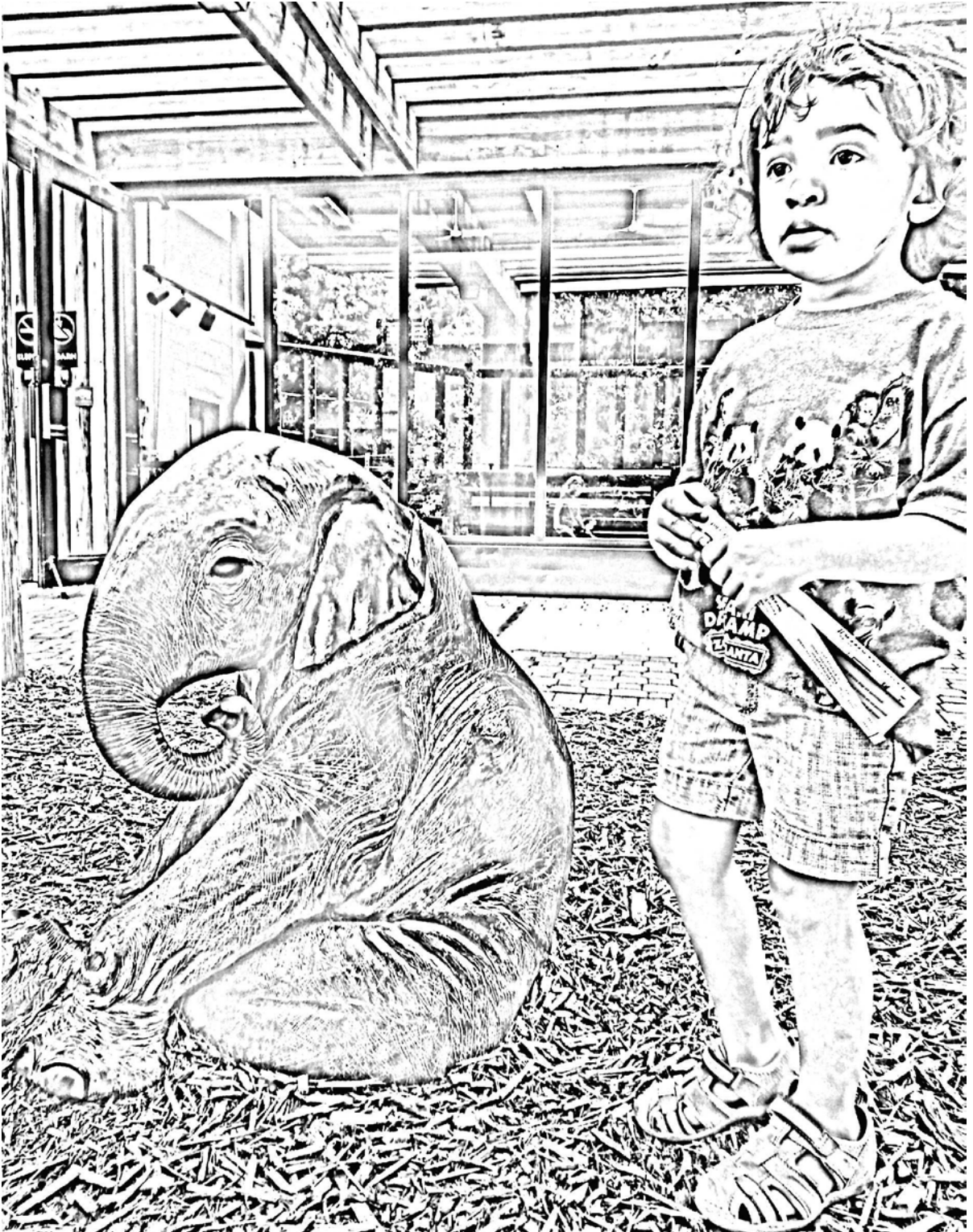
and Maggie told her class how she had found the car keys her mother had lost

Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter



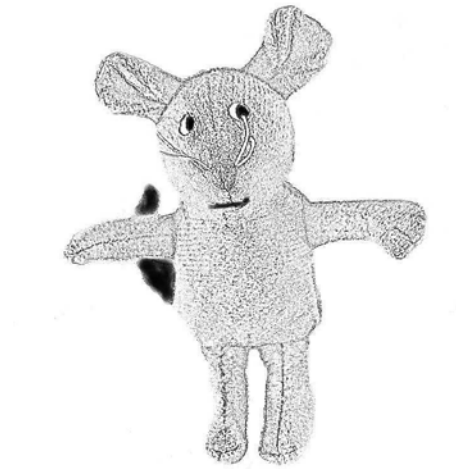
and Annali told her class about visiting the alpaca farm

Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter



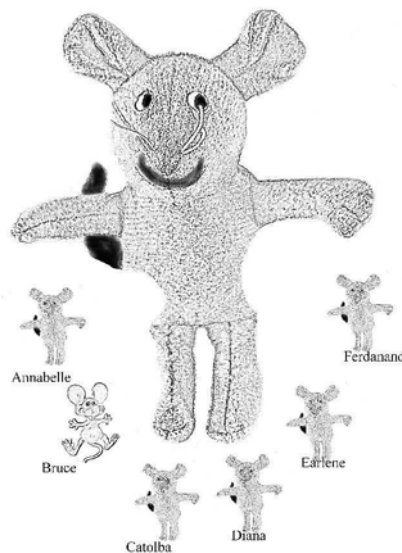
and Eriselle told her class about the baby elephant at the zoo

Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter



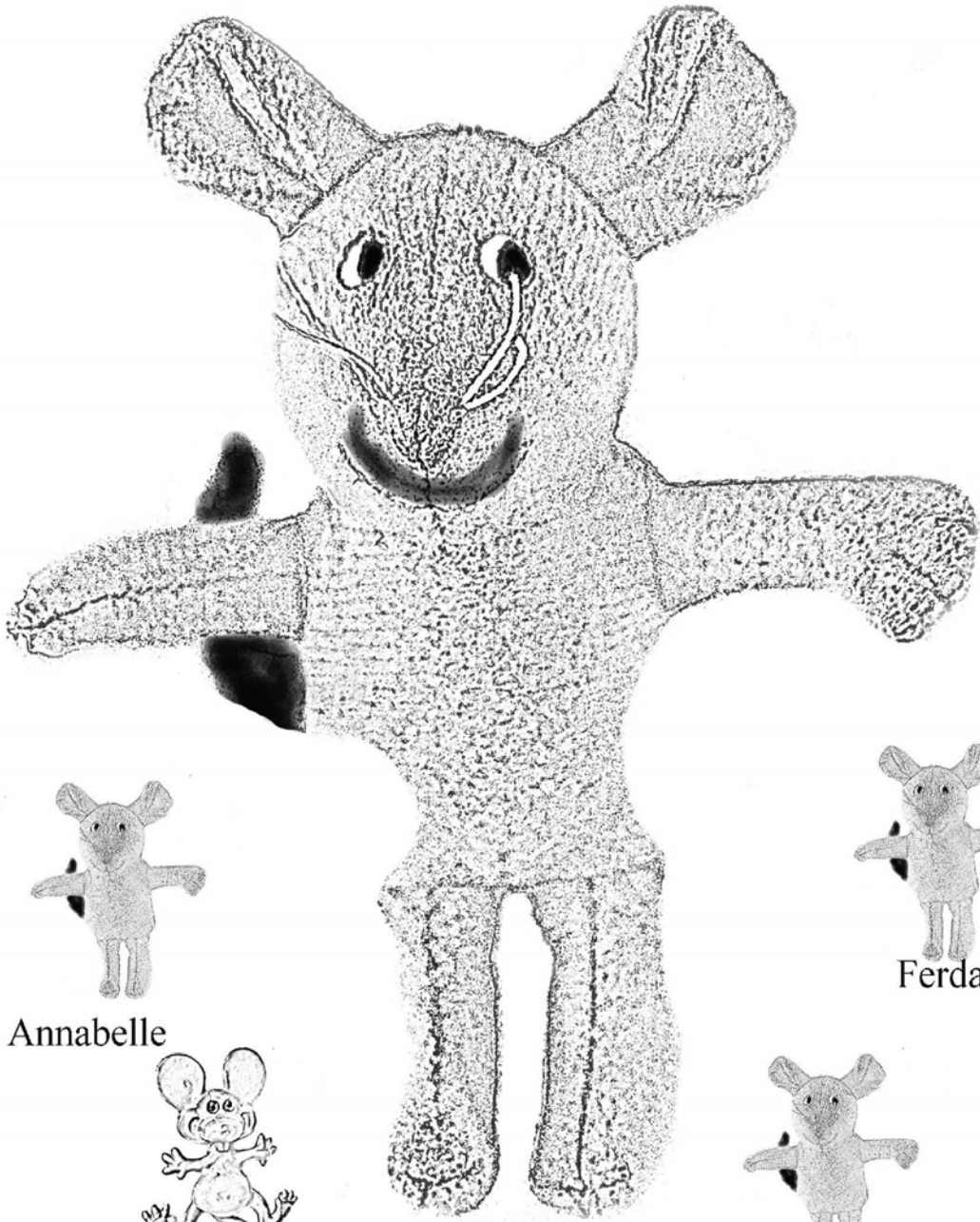
because Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle all knew that no one would believe them if they told the story of Matilda and Annabelle and Bruce and Catolba and Diana and Earlene and Ferdanand.

THE END

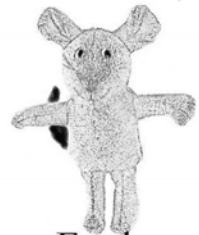


Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter





Annabelle



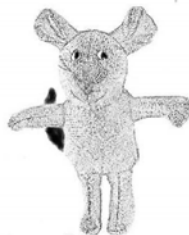
Ferdanand



Bruce



Earlene



Catolba



Diana